**Course Syllabus - American Literature and Composition**

**Ms. J Wilson- jdw8327@gmail.com**

**Course Overview:** American Literature and Composition is a study of the major literary topics and themes across the history of the United States from pre-colonial times to present day. Students will focus on the major literary forms of the emerging nation, analyze the literary themes and trends, and research and compose several papers, speeches, and presentations using representative forms of discourse.

**Class Policies**

**Classroom Rules**

1. All school policies and rules printed instituted by QSI Dongguan will be enforced in the classroom.
2. At all times, students and teachers will treat each other with mutual respect.
3. Arrive to class on time. **You must have a tardy slip to enter the classroom.**
4. All materials must be brought daily – textbook or novel, binder, and blue/black ink pen.
5. No food or drink (except bottled water) allowed in class. (minor exceptions )
6. Restroom Pass- when necessary- never leave my room to use the restroom and end up in another teacher’s classroom.
7. Phones may be used at assigned times as an educational device only.

**Students who fail to comply with the preceding guidelines may expect to receive a detention or disciplinary referral. (class detention- lunch or before school)**

**GRADING**

Grades will be based on the QSI grading policy but, **weighted by category**.

**Approximate Category Values:**

• Tests 25%

• Compositions /Assignments 25%

• MID TERM EXAM 50%

**ABSENCES AND MAKE-UP WORK**

* Based on QSI Policy and Procedures

**PLAGIARISM STATEMENT**

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas and the presentation of them as though they were entirely one’s own. Acts of plagiarism might include, but are not limited to:

• using words or ideas from a published source without proper documentation

• using the work of another student (e.g. copying homework, composition, or project)

• using excessive editing suggestions of another student, teacher, parent, or paid editor.

A note about what constitutes “excessive editing.” Students learn to write well by doing just that, writing. Struggling independently through the writing process produces growth (as well as a certain amount of agony), and eventually the student’s own voice. When well-meaning parents, siblings, tutors, or others contribute their ideas, words, phrases, revisions, etc. to students’ writing, student writers miss the opportunity to achieve literary self-reliance.

So – what is helping, but is NOT excessive editing? The answer is: questioning and cueing. For example: “Is this word strong enough? Interesting enough? Specific enough?” “Can you think of another word that would fit better?” “Does this sentence seem awkward?” “What exactly do you mean?” “I don’t understand what you are trying to say here; can you say it more clearly?” “This sentence has a powerful verb; can you find one as powerful for that other sentence?”

These kinds of questions and statements allow the students to think and write independently. Students should be allowed to find their own voices and to develop their own writing skills.

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**UNIT 1: The Power of Language** (Beginnings of American Literature, Review of Persuasive Writing, Language, and Vocabulary)

Unit Synopsis: The Colonial Period in American literature will be introduced with sample literary works from the period. Emphasis will be placed on nonfiction Colonial texts, as well as on persuasive and expository writing.

Students will research and analyze the various contributions of the American Colonial Period by developing both written and oral presentations. A review of persuasive texts will also help students incorporate persuasive

writing techniques into an essay and presentation, as well as to help students review for the writing portion of the Georgia High School Graduation Test. Throughout the unit, various forms of nonfiction texts will be utilized by students to explore the characteristics of the Colonial Period in American literature. Content and SAT vocabulary will be studied, acquired, and applied throughout the unit. Students will apply this vocabulary throughout their study of American literature.

**Texts Covered in the Unit**

“The Earth on the Turtle’s Back” p. 16

from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* p. 44

from *Journal of the First Voyage to America*

from *The General History of Virginia* p. 72

from *Of Plymouth Plantation* p. 78

from *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* p. 108

“To My Dear and Loving Husband” p. 102

*The Crucible p. 165*

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**UNIT 2: Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death** (Revolutionary Ideas in Revolutionary Literature)

Unit Synopsis: Non-fiction texts from the American Revolutionary period will be studied and analyzed with an emphasis on their use of persuasive rhetorical strategies. Emphasis will be placed on the lasting impact of these texts and their role in shaping an emerging and new form of government on the world stage. After whole class discussion of specific strategies and stylistic devices (parallelism, repetition, allusion, etc.), students will work in pairs and groups to analyze text and evaluate persuasive techniques. Students will practice incorporating newly learned rhetorical and stylistic devices into their own persuasive writing. Students will read and discuss representative American poetry and evaluate emerging American voices. The culminating project will allow students to showcase their persuasive skills in writing and speaking.

**Texts Covered in the Unit**

The Development of American English: Noah Webster p. 136

from *The Autobiography* p. 140

from *Poor Richard’s Almanack* p. 146

The Declaration of Independence p. 156

from *The Crisis, Number 1* p. 160

from *Letter from Birmingham City Jail* p. 180

Patrick Henry - Speech in the Virginia Convention p. 186

Ben Franklin – Speech in the Convention p. 191

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**UNIT 3: Romantic Concepts** (A National Literature Expands-- How does freedom spark a Renaissance in American Literature?)

Unit Synopsis: Texts from the American Romantic Period will be examined, with an emphasis on poetry and on student generated expository writing. Skills of analysis and interpretation will be developed and practiced using the poetry of the period. Students will acquire and apply content vocabulary. Students will analyze and interpret an assigned poem in groups and create a written or oral product. Students will individually compose an expository essay analyzing and interpreting an assigned (and unfamiliar) poem using the correct content vocabulary and references to the primary document.

**Texts Covered in the Unit**

“The Devil and Tom Walker” p. 242

“A Psalm of Life” p. 258

“The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls” p. 260

“The Raven” p. 326

“The Minister’s Black Veil” p. 336

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**UNIT 4: Marching to the Beat of a Different Drum** (The Impact of Transcendentalism in American Literature)

Unit Synopsis: The focus of the unit deals with American nonfiction and poetry. American transcendentalist texts will be analyzed to determine author’s purpose, themes, and specific use of stylistic devices. Students will demonstrate comprehension by applying knowledge of literary devices to identify and to explain supporting evidence. Expository writing strategies continue. Content vocabulary will be applied throughout the study of nonfiction works. Patterns and themes related to recurring topics (the American Dream, individualism, classical influences, etc.) will be identified, analyzed, and validated. Students will respond to transcendentalist texts and will conclude with a culminating activity that combines comprehension, writing, and listening, speaking, and viewing.

**Texts Covered in the Unit**

from “Nature” p. 388

from “Self-Reliance” p. 391

“Civil Disobedience” p. 412

“Walden” p.402

“Because I could not stop for Death” p. 420

“I heard a Fly buzz—when I died” p.422

“The Soul selects her own Society” p. 425

from “Song of Myself” p. 436

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**UNIT 5: Seeing With New Eyes (Realism and Naturalism in American Literature)**

Unit Synopsis: This unit focuses on the literature Naturalism and Realism in American literature with an emphasis on expository writing. After studying and evaluating representative works of Realism and

Naturalism along with their characteristics, students work individually, in small groups, and in the class as a whole to analyze and evaluate representative works. In addition, students will write a reflective essay.

**Texts Covered in the Unit**

“An Episode of War” p.476

“Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” p.488

“Go Down Moses” p. 490

from “My Bondage and My Freedom” p. 496

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” p. 508

“To Build a Fire” p. 608

From “Life on the Mississippi” p.565

“The Notorious Jumping Frog”

“The Story of an Hour” p. 634

“Desiree’s Baby”

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**UNIT 6: An American Tragedy (Studying the American Identity, American Dream, and the American Hero in Modernism and Postmodernism)**

Unit Synopsis: Students will analyze American Modern and Postmodern fictional texts to determine author’s purpose, themes, and specific use of stylistic devices. Students will demonstrate comprehension by applying knowledge of literary devices to identify and to explain supporting evidence. Expository writing strategies will be refined. Content vocabulary will be applied throughout the study of fiction. Patterns and recurring topics (the American Dream, individualism, classical influences, etc.) will be identified and analyzed. Students will respond to fictional passages or texts and film both orally and in writing, concluding with a culminating activity that combines comprehension, writing, and listening, speaking and viewing. The focus of the unit deals with American Modern and Postmodern fictional texts and film.

**Texts Covered in the Unit**

“A Few Don’t s by an Imagist” p. 718

“The Rive Merchant’s Wife: A Letter” p. 732

“In a Station of the Metro” p. 734

“The Red Wheelbarrow” p. 735

“Winter Dreams” p. 744

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” p. 718

“The Unknown Citizen” p. 779

“Birches” p. 882 and other Robert Frost poems

“Now the Negro Speaks of Rivers” p.926

“The Tropics in New York” p. 930

“The Life You Save May be Your Own” p. 972

“The First Seven Years” p. 988

“Everyday Use” p. 1056

The Great Gatsby

A Raisin in the Sun

“A Rose for Emily”

**ADDITIONAL MAJOR ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT:**

Compiling Information into a Formal, Documented MLA Research Paper

Citing Sources and Preparing Manuscript

• Write Formal Research Reports that

∼ culminate multi-media research on a self-selected (and teacher-approved) topic;

∼ use outside source information to support a sufficiently-narrowed controlling idea;

∼ integrate source information using paraphrase, summary, and direct quotation;

∼ demonstrate an understanding of MLA documentation style,

∼ are accompanied by works cited pages.

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**3 Additional Selective Units Chosen By Class Interest**

I have received and read the syllabus for this course.

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Signature of student /Date

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Signature of parent /Date

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Parent phone number

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Parent cell phone

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Parent e-mail